

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

**PUBLIC HEARING
PARK FACILITIES STUDY**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1998
7:00 P.M.**

Present: June Bailey, Lucy Burtnett, Bob Martz, M.S. Mitchell, William Sanders

Absent: Pat Consolver and Leon Robinson

Also Present: Ron Vine, Consultant, Bucher, Willis & Ratliff; Chris Tatham, Management Consultant, ETC Institute; Ray Ontiveros, Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department; and Ron Hayworth, Vince Kendrick, Tim Martz, Janice McKinney and Maryann Crockett (staff)

President Burtnett called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. She welcomed members of the public and thanked them for attending the hearing. She introduced Ron Vine, Consultant, Bucher, Willis & Ratliff. She explained the Mr. Vine would give a brief presentation, followed by public comment, discussion and a question and answer period.

Mr. Vine gave a brief overview of the facility study process stating that it was a four step process consisting of public input, audit, analysis and implementation. He said the entire process was “people driven”. He made several comments relative to demographics, bench marking, financing, on-site facility inspection, programs, partnerships and citizen involvement and input.

Vine introduced Chris Tatham, Management Consultant, ETC Institute, who spoke briefly about the citizen survey to be conducted as part of the facility study. He said the survey was designed by Council District and would measure citizen opinions about such items as partnerships, financing, park facilities and programs, most important unmet park program needs, capital funding, operating costs to maintain parks and recreation facilities, development priorities, where new park facilities should be developed/located and what elected leaders and citizens would support in the way of park facilities and programs.

The following individuals spoke regarding various park programs, facilities and other related park matters:

1. Gene Reed, 1446 Smith - expressed concern about the standing water in Orchard Park and said he felt it was a health hazard.
2. Chris Thompson, 4910 W. Memory Lane - commented that there was a mosquito

problem at Orchard Park because of the standing water. She also mentioned that the neighborhood would like to see the construction of outdoor shelters, the addition of picnic tables, additional lighting, replacement of the snow fences, expanded pool hours and construction of a roller blading area. She added that she and others would be willing to volunteer as "hall monitors" at the recreation center to help provide better control over the children in the halls, who she said were roller blading inside the center.

3. Wayne Templeton, 739 N. Elder, President, Orchard Park Neighborhood Assoc. - requested that the Park Department consider installing additional lighting at the west end of the parking lot at Orchard Park. He said he had been informed that Orchard park was a "non-picnicking park" and requested clarification of that term. He also expressed concern regarding what he felt was poor supervision of the children at the recreation center and mentioned children pan handling and roller blading in the halls. He concluded by requesting that center staff provide more activities for the young people at the center.

4. Dorothy Templeton, 739 N. Elder - requested that additional lighting be provided at the west and northwest exit areas of the parking lot at Orchard Park; that the Library provide a book drop box; that the glass and debris be removed from the playground area on a regular basis; and that pool hours of operation be expanded to be more user friendly for those adults who worked.

5. Dana Giggy, 1017 N. Doris - mentioned the following items relative to Orchard Park: installation of proper lighting; installation of gates at the parking area; the location of the children's play area on a dead end street; standing water in the park; class cancellations because they were not "self supporting"; lack of picnic areas in the park and that the park was not very "user friendly".

6. Larry Bush, 907 E. Mona Circle, Citizen Participation Organization (CPO) Council 4 - commented about park inadequacies in the south part of Wichita. He stated that the people in his neighborhood were not affluent enough, but at the same time they were not poor enough nor minority enough to qualify for Community Development Block Grant funding and other programs. He commented on several south Wichita parks including South Lakes, stating that development of that park had been scaled back considerably from what was originally designed. He also mentioned Emery Park and Watson Park and commented that his children would have to cross several major arterials in order to go to those parks.

7. Larry Henry, 4409 W. Henn - thanked the Board for listening to citizen concerns.

8. Trina Heath - spoke about the "3rd Street Project" and requested the following items: better lighting, benches/seating and a concrete pathway. She commented that the neighborhood would be willing to assist with development of the area and provide "sweat equity" and that they were interested in the matching playground fund program as well as the addition of crossings/bridges. She said the project as designed had literally cut the neighborhood in half and was not very user friendly.

9. Bill Fox, President of Wichita Independent Neighborhoods (WIN) and Riverside Citizens Association (RCA) - commented that the issue was money and that he felt the Park Department needed to get a commitment from the City to maintain and keep up the facilities it had now.

10. David Pendergraft, 3019 E. 2nd, President, Uptown Neighborhood Assoc. - spoke regarding the "3rd Street Project" and made the following comments. He said the area needed pathways and he also suggested acquiring empty homes in the area to add acreage/play areas to the project, so it was not so narrow and linear.

11. David Franks, 3001 E. 2nd, Uptown Neighborhood Assoc. - spoke regarding the "3rd

Street Project” stating that the neighborhood had been promised a park and now they had an open drainage ditch. He suggested that the City acquire additional properties in the area to add to the project. He also requested that lighting be added, that CDBG funding be set aside for improvements and requested the Park Department’s help with development of the area. He concluded by expressing concern about the public hearing notification process.

12. Mike _____, Uptown Neighborhood Assoc. - commented that he felt the City should be more proactive regarding land that can be used for more than one purpose such as the “3rd Street Project”. He said he believes the City has committed itself to developing neighborhood parks over the years, and that developing the “3rd Street Project” into a park area would be a good opportunity to use the land to its fullest extent.

13. Jim Dolenz, 405 N. Chautauqua, Uptown Neighborhood Assoc. - said that although the “3rd Street Project” was originally a Public Works project, he would like to see the area maintained by the Park Department and developed into a linear greenway/corridor, with at least two (2) crossings/bridges. He concluded by mentioning his concern about the safety of children crossing the open ditch.

14. Judy Williamson, 2401 N. Doris - commented that the residents in the vicinity of Kiwanis Park have established a “Park Watch” program that has been very successful in cutting down on vandalism and other activities. She said she felt that Kiwanis Park needed more “teen friendly” equipment and that the Park Board needed to make the public more aware of park programs and facilities such as the matching playground equipment program and others. She added that she felt police officers should also be more aware of park rules, hours, etc,

15. Lois Ann Newman, 2112 S. Topeka, President, South Central Progressive Association (SCPA) - made several comments regarding Lincoln Park stating that the park contained a national land mark which was Fire Station #6; that the neighborhood was disappointed about the pool closing; that the park needed additional lighting, especially at the tennis courts, which were very busy. She requested the consultant’s definition of the term “partnership” and reminded board members of a proposal the SCPA made in 1993 for a convention/tourism park at Broadway and Topeka. She also requested that frisbee golf be removed from Herman Hill Park. She concluded by mentioning that although the City advertised on Cable Channel 7, many people do not have cable television, and that may be why people do not always find out about meetings and other City programs.

16. Gary Hastings

- spoke regarding the “3rd Street project” stating that he liked what had been done so far, but wanted the City to go a little further with additional improvements such as lighting, benches and connecting bridges along the ditch.

17. Eva Commer, 337 Everett - commented on an idea for a park on a plot of land north of the Bypass and Meridian.

18. Larry Ross, OZ Bicycle Club - commented on several items including the following: closure of the bike path from 2nd Street north to Central by the Science Center; the dangerous and unsafe conditions of the bike path on the east side of the river by Veterans Memorial park; that the Bike Plan was part of the Comprehensive Plan and should be reviewed on an annual basis; the lack of notice of this public hearing; development of the “Big Ditch” as a recreational corridor; opening up Pawnee Prairie Park to bicyclists; and that although the “3rd Street Project” was a Public Works project, he felt the Park Board needed to take a more active approach to park and recreation open space needs.

19. Deanna Wheeler, 1331 N. Westlink, Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) - spoke in support of the following issues: multi-use facilities; wider walking paths; additional park lighting; and seating areas or benches at park pools.

Several general questions were asked regarding the survey document, comparing Wichita with other cities, contacting additional park and open space organizations that may be interested in participating in the study, and advertising public hearings/meetings.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.